PDS during 1990, 1991 and in the months of January and February of 1992;

(b) the quantum of above items, lifted by the State Government of Kerala;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Kerala Government has asked for an increase in the quantity of these items; and

(d) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

(c) and (d) Yes Sir, Kerala Government has asked for increase in the quantity of PDS items.

The allocation of PDS commodities is made on a month to month basis, taking into account the stocks with the Central Government, market availability of the commodities, and *inter-se* requirements of various states. Keeping in view the lean season for kharif cereals, the Central Govt. made an ad hoc increase in the allocation of rice for the month of August-November, 1991. 5% ad hoc increase in the allocation of levy sugar was also given to UTs from August, 1991. The Central Govt. has made arrangement to import some quantity of edible oils and allocation to States was resumed in October, 91. The allocation of PDS commodities from Central Pool is generally supplementary in nature and is not intended to meet the total requirements of the States/UTs.

Strengthening of Public Distribution System

428. CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of steps taken in recent weeks to strengthen the Public Distribution System specially, in tribal, hilly and other inacessible areas of the country;

(b) whether more items apart from foodgrains, pulses and edible oils have been included under the Public Distribution System;

(c) whether any monitoring agency has been set up to see that the articles earmatrked for public distribution are actually being made available to the consumers on a regular basis and to look after the grievances of the consumers in the matter of supplies of articles; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) to (d) The strengthening of the Public Distribution System (PDS) is a continual process. The Central Government has identified, in consultation with the State Governments/UT Administrations, about 1700 blocks which are covered by various area specific programmes such as Drought Prone Area Programme, Desert Development Programme, Integrated Tribal Development Projects and Certain Designated Hill Areas for improving the reach of PDS commodities in these areas. The State Governments have been requested to set up village level vigilance committees involving consumers with special representation to women to ensure timely and proper supply and availability of PDS commodities at the Fair Price Shops. Most of the State Governments have reported setting up of such committees. State Governments and U.T. Administration Officials also monitor the PDS with a view to checking diversion/ malpractices. State Governments/ U.T. Administrations have been requested to add additional items of mass consumption such iodised salt, pulses, soaps and tea for distribution using the PDS outlets.